

The Halyard

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Educational Technology

June 2, 2006



Charlie's Chatter

In December of 1998, I came to work for the Department of Education. I was excited to have an opportunity to work with libraries across the state. I did not realize at the time, that I would make some wonderful new friends and colleagues. I never imagined the beauty of the state of Virginia and I have explored many areas of the state. I have traveled to each area of the state, except over to the Eastern Shore. Along the way, I have continued to be impressed, excited, and motivated by the love of children and the dedication that each of you bring to the children of Virginia.

Each spring, when the VEMA road trips begin, I think about all of the wonderful concurrent sessions and the wonderful creative ideas I will see. I look forward to hearing the successes and the challenges that you face. Together we have joined to create documents such as the *Powerful Partners*, the *Academic Success@Your Library* and most recently the *Linking Libraries* project have brought together the brightest and the best to collaborate to show that quality libraries do make a significant contribution to the academic success of all students. At the national library conferences, I have been able to share the work of Virginia and am always amazed that other states face challenges so much greater than the ones we face here in Virginia. I am proud to say that our work is recognized nationally and at the ALA conference in New Orleans next month, the work we have done advocating for school library programs is being included in the materials used in the advocacy pre-conference workshop. The DOE Website was even recognized by School Library Journal as a 'site-of-the-month'. Last fall, I shared our work at Treasure Mountain, the retreat for research on school libraries. We have truly placed Virginia on the map in field of school library programs.

I know that many of you have enjoyed my ramblings and my thoughts expressed each week in the Halyard, even if you weren't sure what a halyard was. A halyard is the rope that raises and lowers the main sail of the sailing vessel. I believe that my job is to raise your awareness, to raise your sights, to cause you to climb to the top of mast to see the future of school library programs. Some of you, like me, have had multiple opportunities to raise and to lower the sails based on the changing of the wind. But along the way, we knew that our goal is to lead others to the Bay of Academic Achievement. I enjoy sharing my thoughts and hearing from you that something I said in this column helped you look at something differently or perhaps even made you laugh.

But now, it is time for me to adjust my sails once more. This time in a new direction. It is with mixed emotions that I share with you that effective July 1, 2006, I will no longer be here at the DOE. I have accepted a position with the Arlington Public Schools as the Supervisor of Library Services. I am excited about working with the wonderful librarians in Arlington.

My time here has been wonderful, my treasure chest is overflowing and I will cherish my years spent as your fearless leader. May each of you remember that we have choices, and

"We can not control the wind but we can adjust the sails"

Happy Sailing,

Charlie

Admiral of the BEST Crew of Librarians in the WORLD

Can you Leetspeak?

Lauren Barack — 5/24/2006

This article originally appeared in SLJ's Extra Helping. [Sign up now!](#)

Are you having trouble reading this sentence?

Ar3 u |-| 4vi| |g 7r0ub13 r34di| |g 7|-|i5?

A lack of fluency in leetspeak might be the reason. The Internet chat language, popular in online video gaming and instant messaging, has been adopted by students as another way to communicate in code—even if it's as innocuous as the question above.

While it looks a lot like simple acronyms akin to text messaging, leetspeak is actually far more complicated, involving numbers and punctuation marks. While that

sounds like fun for young people, it's concerning for educators who can't interpret these online conversations as quickly—and determine if a student is perhaps chatting with someone they shouldn't.

"There are lots of ways kids are trying to go underground, or get around the rules," says Frances Jacobson Harris, author of *I Found It on the Internet: Coming of Age Online* and a librarian for the past 20 years at the University Laboratory High School, of the University at Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "Using slang, like this, is one way."

Kids have long adopted ways to cloak their messages so adults can't understand. And now that much of their communication is online, they've assumed or crafted new languages that they hope

keep parents, teachers, and librarians off their tracks.

[Leetspeak translators](#) have cropped up on the Web to make it easier for adults to decipher these coded messages. But don't spend too much time trying to get fluent with this teen-friendly idiom. Harris believes that the trend may already be fading.

"It's more of a geeky thing, and not universal," she says. "Your average teen is likely to use a more alpha-based style rather than alpha-numeric. It's just too hard."

Online Training Opportunities

Online Learning Opportunities from Thomson Gale

Training at your convenience is available using the online classes offered by Thomson Gale. This site will allow libraries to see when various webinars are being held and the subject matter being covered. Just click on the session of interest and register to attend. Here is the URL and please feel free to share it with your ITRT and classroom teachers

<http://www.gale.com/webevents>

Resources from SIRS

Join one or more of our newsletter mailing lists and you'll automatically receive relevant information when it becomes available. Information includes curriculum ideas, lesson plans, sample searches, content updates, interface enhancements, maintenance windows, and more. By subscribing, your personal

information is used for the sole purpose of providing communications and will not be sold or supplied to third parties.

<http://www.proquestk12.com/signup.shtml>

Filter a website, and you protect a student for a day. Educate students about online safety in a real world environment, and you protect your child for a lifetime.

(Parry Aftab, Executive Director, WiredSafety)

Who Chooses The Books????

On the VEMA list serve a question was posted about how decisions are reached concerning book purchases, here are the responses.

I do not have a committee, but I do get direct input from all members of my community. I have a request for consideration paper that is filled out. (It is approximately 3 inches by 1 inch.) I challenge all of my kids and the teachers to find good books that they would like to see in the library. They request the titles and I check for reviews and to see if other libraries have copies of the title. Often, I request a copy of the titles from another library to review the material either personally or by one of my teachers. I share with my third, fourth, and fifth grade students the entire process from request for consideration to checking reviews and reading the materials to actually making the purchase. Once the materials arrive in school, I check them out to the teacher that requested them or I put them on a cart and spend a week showing them to all classes. The very next Monday, the books can be checked out and usually the person that requested them checks the book out first. I have detailed this process in a parent newsletter and occasionally have parents to request titles, as well.

At my school, I have a Library Committee composed of 3 teachers, 2 parents, and 2 students as well as the principal and myself. I propose a budget and then the committee either agrees with it or alters it. My budget looks something like this (it is at school and I am at home now):

- \$150 per classroom teacher
- \$50 per resource teacher (music, art, PE...)
- \$100 for CDs
- \$500 for books of student interest
- \$500 to replace worn books
- \$100 for big books
- \$500 for videos....

I give the budget to the staff and then they let me know specific titles that they wish for my to purchase. Once a fellow librarian commented on this

system, saying that means I probably have holes in my collection. Then she thought a second and said, "But at least what you purchase is used!" Right! And my staff comes up with some really good ideas! If I did all the choosing, we'd be long on history and short on science! :-) I think it is really important that I consider the needs of resource staff, also. I have been surprised at how few schools do that.

I get inputs from my teachers and I am open to ideas from parents BUT I am interested in hearing about a "committee-type" system as well. I've thought about this from time to time but never looked into it. When I'm not sure about the age suitability of a book for elementary students, it is then that I think would a committee be good for this. Anyway, I'd be interested in hearing if anyone uses this system and if it is good or just causes problems.

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I do not have such a committee in my school, but I do try to order items/titles that teachers ask for. Sometimes I go to the local Borders to get titles if the teacher needs it "now." I usually get suggestions throughout the year and put them in a consideration folder.

Yes, I have a library committee. It is comprised of teachers on all levels, reading specialists, and a parent-a committee of eight. We have not involved the community other than our parent representative. It has been invaluable. I am a 25plus teaching veteran who is finishing up my second year as a librarian. The committee has helped in the selection of books throughout the year. I have had a number of vendors come

into the library so that teachers and parents can look at books and let their needs be known. Our library has needed to be updated in many areas.

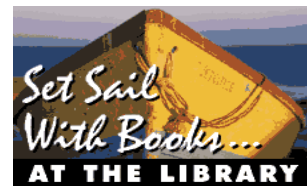
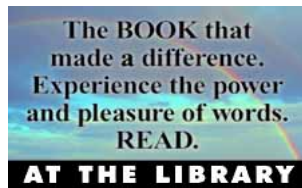
I take suggestions from teachers for books and order almost all requested if they are available.

I certainly can understand asking for input from teachers and I certainly do. Why would I want a committee including the community to help with orders? I have a MLS, read an extensive number of professional journals and am called a librarian.

What I do is have the vendors send their free preview books in the fall and have a "book fair" so that all the teachers can come and look. I have forms available for them to write down all the titles they like and what objectives they think they will use them for. Then I just keep the books I want and send the rest back. Sometimes there is a budget issue with the number they want, so I have purchase the ones that are not already covered well in my collection.

I don't use or have a committee...BUT I ask for written suggestions via memo to teachers near the end of each school year. I usually have a deadline to accept THEIR suggestions. I work on orders over the summer. I do a memo to document their requests AND WHO in fact returned suggestions to me. In my opinion no one has right to grip if I don't have anything they want and NO suggestions were given to me!

I do not have a committee. I ask teachers for topics and then find the books that might meet their needs. I show various teachers the preview books that appear for me to look over and possibly order a few from these boxes but I do ask the teachers for their opinions first. I don't think this is exactly what you want.



Who Chooses The Books????

Whereas we don't have a committee at my school, I do have faculty fill out a questionnaire as to what types of items are needed or wanted ----what subjects , topics, titles, and/or SOL that I need to purchase materials for them per grade level or specialty area. I keep those to look at when ordering and to verify that input was given towards Title V purchases.

We have no official committee. I do keep suggestions from teachers of titles wish for and I try to make note of titles that students ask about. A committee would help, but since we get very little book money each year, we would have no need to meet most years.

I ask faculty to let me know if there are items they'd like to have in the collection, relating to literature and curriculum...or if there are any professional books they recommend. They often bring me ideas from conferences they attend. I also take notice of local curriculum and state standards (SOL).

Here, our collections are developed as a part of the librarian's responsibility and professional judgment. We have to have collection development and selection policies and our guidelines require us to have read two reviews for each item we purchase.

With committees in the system to evaluate videos and novels used for reading instruction in the classroom...teachers are committee'd to death. And who would decide which community members would be chosen to serve on such a committee. Depending on the section of our county...there would be very diverse opinions on any number of titles.

I would resent very much members of the community trying to tell me what to purchase for my library, when I am the one who must coordinate purchases with the curriculum. I scan School Library Journal, Booklist, Wilson's

Catalog and other book selection tools as they are issued and keep a running list of items to purchase, taking into account teacher requests, existing gaps in the collection, curriculum needs, etc. I order at the end of the school year, and as funds permit, several times during the school year - as funds permit and selection tools are published.

Nope. I do all the ordering on my own.

I polled each grade level to get suggestions for what needs to be included in the library. It was very helpful in the ordering process. I feel better knowing that I met their needs. No one asked for anything unreasonable at all. I don't have an official committee, but I do have several key teachers who provide input regularly and give suggestions of materials. I often send out catalogs and have teachers suggest items from them, with no promises of ordering all of it!

We have direct input from our staff throughout the year and we do order what is requested, but we do not have a committee "ok" each title/order.

Heck no! That sounds horrible. Naturally, a good librarian seeks to know the needs of her users and always tries to fulfill those needs- but the idea of being only the member of a committee that performs one of the most important functions of a school librarian's job is terrible. We are hired for our expertise in the field of librarianship and one of our areas of expertise is book selection. Another area is service to our patrons. Put the two together and you have the person who should be making the final decisions with input from faculty members and others with interests to be served. We should have the big picture. Others should be able to provide us with the details

I ask for teacher requests and I also keep up with books that anyone asks

for during the year that we don't have. (Students, parents, teachers, etc.) We do not have a "committee" though.

We generally give catalogs to the teachers and ask them to list their needs in a prioritized order.

I wish! I am a recent graduate of ISU in Educational Technologies, and all my courses strongly recommend a selection committee of some sort. This is my first year as a high school media specialist, and I have inherited a system that is in need of more than a small overhaul. One year at a time! But I deeply hope that I can form some sort of collection policy as well some sort of collection committee within the next two years of my tenure. Please post a hit if you get information on how others managed to do this.

I get input and requests from teachers but do not have a committee.

I send an email to all staff members at my school requesting input. I file the replies in my email inbox. I also ask for requests at faculty, School Improvement Plan, and grade level meetings throughout the year. If I know that someone is going to a conference, I ask them to be on the lookout for items that we should purchase. I also hold on to the wish-lists that members of the faculty prepare at Book Fair time.

I'm glad to report I am (I think). Even though we do not have a formal committee, I keep a running list on Title-wave (Follett) of book titles that are requested by teachers, parents, students, and even community leaders after they attend workshops, seminars, etc. I also keep a list of who is requesting that particular title, and then make sure that person is the first to know when that title arrives. Our community has a very active Boy Scout troop which every year donates a large sum for books and AR tests. In return I place a book plate in the purchased

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book with the name of a boy scout or leader. Also active is a group of baseball parents who requested books on fair play, biographies and techniques. I also recognize them in the same way. In honor of our school retirees, a group of us gets a collection together and purchases book titles we think the honoree would like or are interested in. Last year we purchased the Sugar Creek Gang series for the group that has been very active in their church. Then each year in the spring we have a "baby shower" complete with favors and cake for our "new arrivals" making sure we invite the people who have requested book titles and made donations. Sometimes I purchase books after reading a review in SLJ or the local newspaper. I am always listening for new and interesting titles from almost anywhere to support the Va. SOL's and get kids to read. Is this the kind of thing you are talking about? Do I need to do more? In a different way? Please respond and let me know.

I do all of my own ordering.

Well, I would not be totally happy about having a committee select my books. The other librarian and myself do select them. With that said, however, I am very open to any teacher, parent, and students, recommending any specific titles. I keep a want file, and put those recommendations in there. When it is time to order, I pull them out and look at them—look at the reviews--& decide whether to purchase it or not.

I am going through the usual end-of-the-year stresses. You all know what they are. That said... It seems to me that we have all been trained in the art of selection. We each have, I hope, a critical eye. We each have a written selection policy/guide. We are each well-acquainted with our curriculums. We each accept (and honor) purchase requests from the entire school community of parents, staff and students and, occasionally, from those in the community outside of the school. We are each aware that we sometimes make mistakes when purchasing. Why or why would anyone want or need yet another committee! Am I missing something here? I thought that was my job. Am I

waaay off base? Am I just too tired? Just wondering...

I formed a committee like this, but it was almost more trouble than it was worth, so I didn't even try it at this school. Working parents have trouble meeting during the day, and it becomes a burden to teachers to meet outside of school hours. Also, parents/community members don't really have the expertise to select materials--that's what we're trained in! So it kind of became an exercise in my teaching them what kind of criteria to use.....In my opinion, an active & responsive suggestion system, both in the library and via the web page, is a better idea.

What we do at my school is ask the teachers to look at titles, review titles, and give input about which materials, books, DVDs, etc would be beneficial to their subject area. Once they give us their responses, we begin ordering. Throughout the year, we keep a running list of books and AV open in Online Selection Assistant(OSA). When a teacher (or student) expresses the need for materials, we are able to easily pull up our list and place the order with the other materials that we have chosen. So far, this has proven to be very effective.

I choose the books with teacher and student recommendations.

We pretty much do our own selecting based on reviews or what we've seen in stores, etc... No committee. Sometimes teachers come to us to make requests or inquiries. We also have students who don't mind asking. We usually then look into any reviews about their recommendations, etc... and often make the purchase. If it is appropriate and they want to read it....

Librarians make the library selections in schools, and base decisions on: their education and training as librarians knowledge of the curriculum selection and collection development policies reviews from credible sources input from teachers and students. There should NEVER be a committee that makes these decisions. That is moving closer to dismissing school librarians as unnecessary. I find the suggestion of a committee that includes community members very disturbing.

I have been working with librarians for nearly 24 years. Librarians have within their makeup a major commitment to the student need and go out of their way to make sure the library they are in charge of facilitates this purpose.

Are not librarians trained to select material for the collection? I do not know of one single librarian who would not be open for suggestions. On the other hand, I do not know of any librarians who have time for yet another committee meeting! SOL's in Virginia (sometimes unfortunately) dictate buying practices. The school librarians are well aware of each grade level needs. Our school librarians have one of the most important and diverse of all jobs in our schools today. Let someone else run the committee and simply give the librarian their list of ideas. Their budgets will and have been the judge.

No. It's up to me. I solicit suggestions and ask opinions, but it's up to me.

